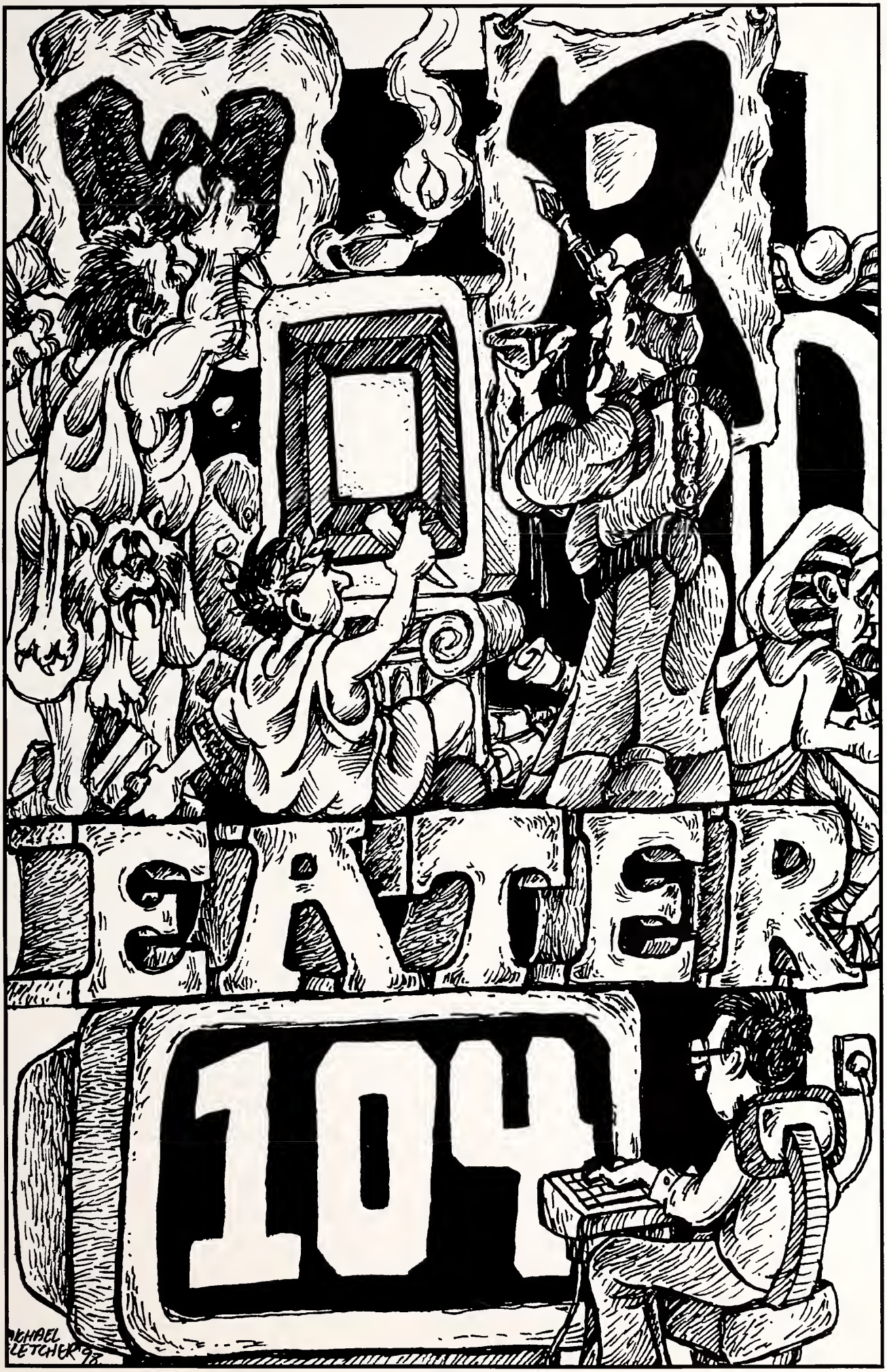
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DEATER
104
MICHAEL
LETCHER '98

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In the last Wordeater (issue 103) the name of the artist that drew the graphic for page 3 was mistakenly omitted. Julie Clark submitted the graphic that was used in the issue of Wordeater 103. Sorry, Julie. Please submit again.

Day
Anonymous

I wish it were day,
And that the night were further away.

The sparkling stars, and the cold I've loved,
Is now too cool to keep warm.
So many hours until the sun makes it
    travel around the world to me again.
A tiny grain of sand on a large planet.

How can I expect to be washed ashore
    onto the lands I love?
I am where I am put, or scattered, or blown.
Dreams and wishes belong to the night,
When one is in oneself.
When there is only you. . .
Only silence. . .
only. . .
you.
How I wish it were day.

The daylight sun may burn,
but the night makes something
    in me shudder.
It is the fear of being alone.
What will happen when things get still,
    and the day's work ends. . .
Music in my mind, but no name to the songs.
To sleep?
Never.
To surrender?
Never again.

(no title)
Anonymous

As the blue line wavers,
So shall I.
I am strong beyond gates,
Past the edges of the moon,
Yet I,
Being,
Living,
Gather the fruits of the land,
and cherish them,
EAT.

-SNOW-
Anonymous

With snow also comes,
many fond memories,
Of best friends,
And snowball fights,
Warm fireplaces,
And silent nights,
Smoking chimneys,
and
flakes on your tongue,
Snow makes you act
like you did
when you were young.

Seconds . . .

Anonymous

Someone else died today.
She left this world of red and orange,
and traveled to the blue and white.

Black pearls fall to the ground.
Children and loved ones pick them up.
How empty some seconds will be. . .
In each minute. . .

The days will be just as bright
but it's another secret in the night. . .
One who left.
Another who left. . .
Left us.

"Gold"

Anonymous

I got a gold clock the year that I fell
in love with you.
It was a gift, my time would shine.
I'd feel what to do.
The crystal spheres that spun round
and round,
reminded me of the beauties all around.
Time surrounded me then
with warm rays of day.
Then the night came.
As if dreaming, the nightmare awoke me.
I was someplace I'd never planned to go.
I ran and I ran but got nowhere,
because my legs would move so slow.
A satin sky of gray and black
covered the blue above.
I spoke to my heart, "Let's leave this place..."
But it was deaf with love.
You stood.
Who were you? Where was I?
The questions invaded my mind.
Unaware no matter what questions I'd ask,
an answer I'd never find.
The place spun as the sphere
on my clock spun.
Time and reality hooked together.
My dizziness had me float like a feather,
Helpless, gentle, breakable.

When I left you...the ticks turned
to minutes,
the minutes to days. . .
I tried to forget all of your ways.
The mornings into nights,
the days into weeks,
into everyday you seeped in like a leak.
I tried to gain ground, but a panic shook me.
No matter how tightly I held,
the year left me.
I said, "That was the last year."
As fast as the snow had come before,
Spring's scent knocked upon my door.
So happy to see the colors outside,
The scent and the sun strengthened
the colors inside.
Summer, Fall, and icy cold once again,
this is how another year would end.
But, "Never again. . ."
I stretched my arms, and squinted my eyes,
I would not see you,
and "This love was lies. . ."
My mind and my strength,
and all of my soul,
All but my heart was in my control.

Red Confetti, Glitter and Smoke
Anonymous

It's like holding on to the
Chains of a swing. . .
It's like touching the wheel as it spins. . .
You've got the bright lights. . .
they're shining in my eyes,
What's your disguise?
You've got me. . .
You've got me. . .
You've got me. . .
And. . .
a little bit of
Vegas

Refugee
Anonymous

Romance
isn't something that can be captured. . .
Romance
captures you.
And if your eyes don't notice. . .
And your ears don't hear. . .
You can escape
or
Can't just as reasonably.

Sunset
Anonymous

As the blue waves crashed against the shore,
and the gulls
among the clouds screeched their song
of survival,
I watched the sun drift to the other side
of the world,
as the welcomed moon
blew kisses to the shells.

Unresolved
Berta Arias
(Faculty)

You hurt yourself.
Or was it I who injured you?

No matter.

The open sore gaped and bled
And then began to scab.
We watched it start to heal.

But, unknown to me,
You picked at it again
And when I looked, surprised was I
To find the sore in profuse bleeding.

We treated it again.

But over time
I'd think the sore was closed
Only to find you
scratching at the scab.

And over time,
In the healthiest of health,
More often and repeatedly
I'd sense you picking at the sore

A numb madman
Out of control
Feeling some secret and perverse joy
In the pain.

And so I left you
    Picking at your self.

time trials

Ken Biggs

i sat musing alone on a kicked green knoll
pounding sounds of the jackhammer jungle
    shouting above the hissing cortege
as concrete convalesced
    in a sultry afternoon haze

smoke belched thick as crows against
    a worried sky
while oily peppered breath ran like
    a thief through my thinned tawny locks
begging an answer why the road behind
    had faded so fast
while ahead slowed so gray in a cobble
    of blurry shadows

once
shining studebakers eased amid
    gleaming stately elms
as haley jiggled the day and platters
    purred into the crisp darkness
keeping the greasy aplomb reassured
    by cocky swagger
bats curtly cracked in summer's
    shimmering echo
and ebullient voices shouted in staccato
    animation
since mickey once again cleared the path

the sidewalk stoops
filled by chuckling whispers
among neighborhood doorways
    and heart unsealed
eyes welcoming in sleeping dog smiles

now
lost in the pallid collapsing aggregate
    of dim dusty stone
I frantically sift dreams to bind the paving
    of hope
against this muddled marble mirage
in a forest of travelers
destined to conjecture
among the maze
of the green grassy
knoll

spirit's trough

Ken Biggs

amber swells the cockcrow's spawn
to stretch and wake the day
and feed the seeds of yestereen dreams
while golden fingers splay

tomorrow's sorrow shall not be borrowed
mettle seeks a rendezvous,
unrelenting intent overwhelms dissent
the nourished and nurtured are due. . .

Ambush
Ken Biggs

thunder plundered
slashing a distant arena
. . .we stalked the darkness
in a coiled arc of doom,
waiting

smothering inky silence
dampened only
by a gnawing buzz
which noshed upon our flesh
greedily

punctuating the secrecy
eyes useless as rocks
quarrel with agitated ears
the senses taut and barbed,
vilely

rest, metered and fitful
in this theater of death
cleaving its veil
to the applause of heartbeats
and icy-sweated breath. . .

SOLE REVIEW
Sally Biggs

Red, red, boldest of colors
cheery, brazen, bouncy, alive.

Woman evokes lust
attired in alluring scarlet.

Fiery flash of cardinal
snares the eye as it flies.

Christmas glows in crimson
bows and shining lights.

Fire Engine stop sign warns
halt before proceeding.

Ruddy apple cherry strawberry
juicy pleasing delights.

Sunset burns the sky
in glowing ember shades.

Iron blood coursing within
carrying fluid of life.

This vibrant hue needs no applause
for it shouts and salutes itself.

Hummingbird
Sally Biggs

Summer flowers perspire sweet scent
as fairytale vision collides with eye
miniature body glimmering green
stirs the air with tiny wing
hovers kissing beak to flower
feeding on natures finest fare
flits and flutters from bloom to bloom
searching to satisfy hungry need
exhausted now from such intensive labor
flies to rest on twigs small perch
energy restored zooms off and away
vanishing through a hole in the day

SLEIGHT OF HAND
Sally Biggs

Fall arrives with open hand
positioning ruthlessly over the land

Crushes summer's bountiful gains
while smothering its woeful refrains

Snatches and grabs handfuls of color
shrinking and draining all of its luster

Waves out symphony of cricket and bird
dry wracking coughs of decay now heard

Stretches out pale icy cold fingers
pushing away warmth that lingers

Then with echoing slap to the face
winter survives fall's place

Young
Erica Dawn Bloom

When I was young, the ground was running
    beneath my feet.
Always somewhere to go,
and magic there.
Now I've turned around.
Doesn't seem that long ago. . .
But time has passed,
    some days have left me.

The summer sun burned my skin.
The winter snow soaked and bit me.
The fall wind blew tales of life to come,
and the spring welcomed my birthdays.
There once was fire,
an innocent flame,
a dream with both eyes open.
The sky was empty and endless and true.
Glowing red, orange, yellow, green,
    purple and blue.
Nothing was the same outside,
    everything turned.
All angles I learned.

Sheets of strange ice lay on my car
    early one morning.
I'd never seen anything like it.
Something new greeted me again.
But somewhere I had to go,
and it left- as soon as it came.
Some days I wonder,
if childhood
is time.

I Can't
Erica Dawn Bloom

Don't you see?
I can't be sad without you.

At first I thought to hide behind a tree. . .
But the tree reached its limbs up so far
    and high. . .
So,

I ran to the forest to become lost,
But there was always a path to lead the way.
I sat in the rain to let it make me cold.
But I was warmed as by a fire,
    by what my heart's told. . .
So, I left for a flight to a place
unknown. . .
But to home and to myself
    I'd already been sewn.
Sad reaching?
Sad finding?
Sad warm?
Sad home?
Don't you see?
I can't be sad without you.

Life

Erica Dawn Bloom

One day I caught myself on a beach, alone.
I wanted to reach in to the ocean.
The grains of sand beneath my feet were
    like diamonds,
and I felt like I was standing on the edge
    of time.

Somedays it would feel so empty.
And the concrete would stay
    as stone beneath my feet.
It would cover the greenest grass,
    and keep the roses from growing.
I'd step outside and its cold wind
    I would meet.

But, when I close my eyes and remember,
what life is in reality,
I can forget this very late December,
and to the sapphire ocean is
    where my heart takes me.

Stars falling from the sky,
and I'm reaching out to the depths
    of the ocean.
Past the weeping willows I will fly,
and the wind's keeping me in motion. . .
Spheres of rainbows everywhere,
Just reach your hand out and you'll be there,
It's where I want to be,
and it's all I can see.

"Keep your mind on this world
    that is around you."
"Open your mind and you'd better listen
    to what they say."
"Work harder it will be worth it,
    and do all that you should do."
When inside me I just want to get away.

I longed for home—
    but I never could be there.
I made a stand—but no one would hear.
I called aloud—
    but the city would echo my words.

The other day I left this world of troubles.
I closed my eyes and traveled to the sea.
Now the warm sand wraps around me,
And I found,
It was waiting for me.

Tiny Island
Erica Dawn Bloom

small, tiny island, beaten by the sea.
The waves.
The wind.
The water.
The salt.
Cold ice, but warm sun.
A deserted island.
Sounds that echo, but nothing found.
Green,
and gray sands.
White glimmer bright off the grains.
They sparkle, but no one sees.
So far away, long ago, timeless.
With the wind blowing across the land.
Touching—— no-one?
no one for the wind to touch?
And the greens grow,
upward,
reaching up.
Taller and Taller.
Until they're done, growing to the sun.
Another takes their place.
All of this surrounded.
Enclosed by miles of blue.
Water that is clear blue, the bluest blue,
    aqua blue, darker blue, deeper blue,
    midnight blue.
Deeper and deeper and deeper depth.
Outward to go outward.
Reaching around,
and meeting itself again.
Touching— nothing.
Exceeding— everything.
On and on.
There.
Somewhere.
tiny island.

this martyrSocrates
Jason Braasch

There's no time for cuckoo clocks
and throwing wallets at your windows
All these groundlings aren't so blase-fair
    landing cousins in London
    while the martyrs in Terr
this punishable threat of gently
knocking at gateways
    one-one
    night

    Stand on Hemlock hill
        in leave loss concurred
            this affixed memory
            of the conquering of
            the infidels

Untitled
Jason Braasch

box-elderly broken forthright
sadly, the role slackens
this lifelived path of joy
misshappened by dexterity
houses longsince branched
in heart shaped pious powders
of gold and blue and me & you forevers
this makeshift box is emptyNesting
one soul not two. . .

the fall of the Asexuals

Jason Braasch

We spent a lifetime
asking ourselves
why we do the
things we do.
—discussing temperament
& the unholy
? of Truth
vs.truth.
All we know is
we should
n't've
uncovered our weaknesses.
We shoulda kipped up
&
guarded our grills.
-knuckles up
-head down

Although we tried to be,
We were never masters.

-just quartered
and fed to the untraceable
sucker punches of destructive comments
and constrictive clothing—
A certain trial & error of chasing chaste.
(We tried to be)
Ever cautious of 2 Apropos opposers:
words of worldlies
and celibatecelebrations.
Misshappen by the Destructor
of all things
conscious:
the covetous nature
of fantasies.

a first place ribbon

Jason Braasch

Allover dishpan hands are clean
from breakin'news of border
Linedrowning }inny motion
asmotion flows from loveless
known

stating
"this last time was ever"
and never had been forgiven

given a first place ribbon,
orchestrating a world beat band
with in chest drums. a certain receipt
insuring distance and
sovereignty association
; a twofold path back to the basics
remembering why we started
in the first place

Untitled

Sam Burke (Alumni)

into the beech forest
run your fingers along
smooth trunks
walk upon roots
and feel the beating of hearts

The Orchard

Sam Burke (Alumni)

why is it on that island of
the rising sun behind the grave
of that great master Hakuin,
nearly seventy tombstones
are planted like an orchard,
victims of Zen sickness they say
some turned to maniacs, sent stirring to
the void too hard, they sweated
    white beads profusely
the waking comes sometimes hooded
    with sickle
or crashes onto their mind like a blacksmith
    on an anvil,
maladaptive to new understandings
    of the illusion,
but now with the money making medicators
to subdue tormenting comprehensive
    with potions and palm reading
to our advantage perhaps now we'll
    and plant fewer orchards
and to allow us to attend to
    more dead-wooding,
those branches that creep back
    with disease and infection,
but those monks gave their carcasses
    happily admiring the
burrowing maggots and becoming them
    then into blackbirds
and acrobatic sparrow they now
    conglomerate in our world
proudly they sent their flesh into absorbing
    root systems that
twisted and turned through rib cages,
    curled and caressed bone
extracting their substance for more life
    in never-ending cycles,
and back to life they went
    into the pecking pigeons
the acrobatic sparrows and gnarled
    clifftop junipers
they rise up daily like for us
    like warriors and go to war
with their penetrating subtleties
    and deep bows
put their head on the chopping block
    without flinching

The Lumberjacks

Sam Burke (Alumni)

the lumberjack hit the forest
with coarse laughter like a pack of dogs
they attack with muscle (what kind)
shoving tree flesh though
    their chipper-shredder
that regurgitates it mangled,
like dogs they go back to their own vomit
worse than the scankiest whores. They
enjoy their prostitution lip licking,
their country needs the money
with insatiable criminal desire
in criminal act
they rape the world

Haiku
Melinda Cardona

Strong stallion run strong
Long beautiful strides go far
Into the dawn sun

Long horned horse dance with
The open sky line - display
Your beauty to us

Pain
Melinda Cardona

Felt through the body,
Inside my mind.
Can't escape,
There's nowhere to hide.
Physically -
Nothing can endure
Mouth fixed to scream,
A shriek calls out -
Won't stay inside.
Eyes bulge their plea
And the regret.
Nose flaring,
Smelling its own death.
Mentally -
Is worse.
It is smarter and knows -
There can be no cure,
To the death that awaits
Only seconds away.

Between
Melinda Cardona

Here - not there,
But here neither.
In your mind
In space
Darkness invades -
Evades.
Slipping through
Time and place
And fall -
Between.

Genevieve
Melinda Cardona

A young maiden.
A beauty in life
And much adored, was she.
Men they came from all
the lands just to meet
the maiden they called,
    Genevieve
    Genevieve
you see, spoiled was she.
Daughter of Lord Michael
I believe. Who gave to every
whim she plead
And never denied her another.
At age sixteen,
Told was she,

To marry the King to be.
To this remark
She hastily denied. Then turned
and spit in his eye. Fled to the
stable then rode to her place by the
sea.
A young maiden
A beauty in life
And much adored was she.
That tragic night,
what a pity,
my, my!
The storm winds burst.
The exploding waves against rock
along the deadly sea.
The clock rang thrice
And thrice he kicked
And fed her to the sea.

In Me

Melinda Cardona

Emptiness inside,
Tears descend from my eyes.
Heart filled with misery,
To the point I feel I'll burst
With a flow of emotions.
Or to be inside myself to
Escape and elude everything that reminds
Me of the moments spent in time -
Together.
Tear stained pillow,
Letters of false love,
    Confusion?
I know now
That it is much too late.
The memories of you
Will always keep the
    Hurt
  Agony
    Affection
  Devotion
        fondness
And most of all the love,
I feel for you
  Inside -
never to be let loose again.
To experience and expand
To learn and appreciate
What someone may have to give.
Because you destroyed that
IN ME
And it is forever afraid to come out,
  Again.

Alluring

Erica Coffey (Alumni)

Soft, smooth, sensuous
Velvet, cashmere, and skin
Sleek, slithering, sexy
Silk, satin, and a grin

In a World

Erica Coffey (Alumni)

Glimpses of purity
In a world where there is no black
or white, only shades of gray
Strike me with their beauty.
Rare moments of truth
In a world where leaders
get positions by being the best liars
Set my soul free.
Feelings of security
In a world of backstabbing
and chaotic change
Fill me with joy.
Impulsive encouragement
In a world where pushing others down
brings success to the pusher
make me feel strong.
A sudden smile
In a world where angry eyes
and cast down faces are all around
Brightens my day.

To be read 4/27/2004

Erica Coffey (Alumni)

Dear Erica at 27,

Hello! Happy Birthday! I love you and I hope that everything is going good. You better be married to Josh now and be happy and full of love for your baby and he should be happy and full of love for you. I hope that you are secure with Josh and with yourself and your position in life. I hope that you have learned to be happy in life with the way that it is set up or that you have just entirely bypassed the regular life system and made your own way of living. Don't ever stay completely within the lines of society. Don't live a monotonous life according to all the stupid rules. Who cares what everyone else is doing; you can fly as high as you want to. And it doesn't hurt to smoke a joint or get drunk every once in a while in case you have gotten to the point where you think it does. Variety is the spice of life. Remember to run around a fire naked and go wa-wa-wa like an Indian someday. Of course, you might want to get drunk first for that one. Paint pretty pictures and write poems and write a book. Have your lawn be all flowers and make a labyrinth with bushes in your backyard. Lay down in the grass and watch the clouds all day (a hit of acid might make this more interesting). You better start preparing yourself for becoming the first woman president. Run for governor or something (mayor). No matter how much ugliness there is in the world, there is always beauty somewhere if you look hard enough. Don't be jealous. Trust Josh completely. Don't worry. Remember — "Life is just too short and there's no time for fussing and fighting my friend." Don't conform to the world. Smile. Laugh. Love. Hopefully you've gained a little patience and some peace of mind. The sky and God will always be there for you and of course, so will I. Don't ever get divorced. Don't even let that word come out of your mouth or enter your head. Control your mind and think happy thoughts. "Ground Control to Major Tom." You should have a nice career now-maybe as a teacher. Hopefully you've found a passion for a certain line of work so you can be happy with

what you have to do to get by in this life system. Maybe you have kids. Wow! I hope they gave you drugs while you were in labor. Remember, if you have a girl name her Skye Violet. Be patient with your children. They are human. Don't expect too much out of them or yourself or Josh. Don't ever get bitchy or old or snotty. Don't ever forget how to have fun or let loose every once in a while. Learn to sing good and maybe play an instrument too. Dance. Have fun. Relax. "And I ain't got no worries cuz I ain't in no hurry at all." Try to touch people's lives with love and sunshine. Add happiness to others. I hope you're a decent cook by now. Decorate your house really cool, not like anyone else's: unique- out of the ordinary. Buy a horse. Get a barn and paint a rainbow on it. Paint a mural on your ceiling or wall or both in your house. Carpet the ceiling. Take a vacation. If you can't afford it be content with what you have but never stop dreaming and never stop trying. Someday you'll have your castle. It would be nice to have one on earth, but if not, you'll have one in heaven. Be close to Jesus and live for God. Jesus loves you- wild child, full of grace, savior of the human race. Try to find something beautiful in everything and if you can't then look at something else. Have harmony and balance in your life. I hope you have lots of self-confidence by now. I believe in you and I always will. You can do anything that you put your mind to. Don't ever give up. Don't ever lose faith in yourself, in Josh, or in God. I hope you got through college okay and found a nice job that you enjoy. Don't settle for a life that you do not enjoy. I don't like college. I hate writing papers and constantly doing things that I don't want to do, but I'm doing it all for you so you better make sure that the hard work pays off, okay. I can't wait to be done with college, and to have a secure position in life instead of being stuck between childhood and adulthood. Don't ever completely lose the child part, the carefree part. I've already lost a lot of it but we can't lose it altogether. Run through a field (if there are any left) in a sundress with no thoughts in your head just a feeling of delight. Don't be mad if your kids do drugs or have sex. Let them be open with you but guide them and encourage them as best you can down the right path. Don't just tell them not to do something, give them reasons and consequences-let them know why. Honor your parents and love your sisters. Do special things for your parents — they have always done everything for you. Be responsible but don't ever get too adultish. Don't be uptight — have fun, live. Have some spontaneity and excitement. Go to a concert and dance with your baby all night. I love you. Have the best life possible.

Love always,
Erica at 20

Ready to Write

Betha Cramer

Thoughts are circling in my head
And it is so seriously late at night
I positively should be in bed
But I'm ready to write.
Thoughts keep arriving
brilliant and bright.
Oh, I should clear my head
and go directly to bed
But I'm ready to write.

Confusion
Bryan Croxen

Lost in the woods
I see no exit
A wall of trees surround me
I'm looking for cover
I feel like I'm blind
The leaves are falling on me
Seems like there's no end
to this bombardment

No answers are found
no way but down
must find this exit
and start again
no one can save me but me
I must hurry
or the answer will be gone

The New Day Arises
Bryan Croxen

Holding thought can lead to depression
your mind can easily be shattered
the matter is swelled to nihil
and the conjure is over

The new day arises
the pain has healed
but the scar still lurks
as the victim still lies

The scar still lurks around
to find the host
as the day hopes
there is better shine

New possibilities of lost eyes can see
where old possibilities died
the lesson has told to many
how to fade easily

Life's Too Short
Kim Ensing

Life's too short; it goes so fast
The future enters, exits the past
New things to learn and do
Good and hard times to go through
Once young, now old
Houses lived, now sold
Years ago a babe, now a man
Enjoying life as best he can
Life's too short, it'll soon pass by
We must quit our dreams and leap to the sky

On My Own

Erica Gallagher (Alumni)

Sitting back in a chair I own, I bought
Looking out the window at a child
    I gave birth to
Talking on the phone to a friend
    I haven't heard from
In so long when just yesterday
    we were smoking in her room.
Holding the hand of a man
    I can't remember loving as much
As I do this very moment -
    since we wed the world has bloomed
The clouds seem smaller
    and the trees were just planted
This young home we have made
    has made us whole.
Pouring tea from a glass carafe
    I picked out by myself
And sipping it remembering
    how my mother's tea tasted
And it's not like mine at all,
    but I try not to linger on that thought
My baby is outside and I notice her legs
    have grown,
Her face has changed just these past few
    months, when was she in my arms?
I hate time and I hate the bottle
    that won't hold it still for a minute
I want to revert and kiss lips of lovers
    I never kissed,
Hold my mother's tiny body close
    to mine and tell her I love her
Wrap my arms around my daddy
    and ask him for help with my homework
Get to know my sisters,
    get to know myself and
Take back those long years of being young
    when young meant knowing
Too little.

I Love To Write For You

E.L. Gallagher (Alumni)

I used to horde my poetry
I used to think of it as therapy only
These black pens and college ruled leaves
Used to literally own me.

I can't imagine a more raw emotion
God how I yearn for it nightly and daily
If words were a ship without a mast
Let it be me and sail me! Sail me!

My best written accounts I have to offer
Are the ones I fear to share
But as long as I live this life
I will let them be yours, I swear!

Hail! Hail! I'm giving you my poetry
The few things I wish not to give
So now you have been touched
    by something
That will stay with you as long as you live.

I Want Her Composure

Erica Gallagher (Alumni)

Nothing is as sweet
As viewing the temperance she holds
No matter who she meets
Like a nickel for a dollar
And dirt for gold
She is rich and she is smart
She is beauty and she is glory
I want to be the end of her story

I want to be the valve of her very heart
I want her to scream and holler
Every time I do something that she approves
I want to examine her moves
I want to look like her - all me, all her
She is a cherry
She is a Cadillac, a Queen Mary.

Important Love (To Mom)

Erica Gallagher (Alumni)

I want you to look at the window
The sun's at an angle allowing
you to see yourself
I want you to see your reflection
in the tinted glass
I want you to see yourself for once
in your life
The world's at a time where
no one can sleep easy
I want you to tune out of the reckless days
of catastrophic
Revolts and. . .
Come here and lay your weak head
on my shoulder
I'm not here to make your days
any more cruel than they are
I'm not her to take your time away
Like I have before
I want to make you feel important
Sometimes I think I'm the one out
of the whole world who knows you.
I want you to walk yourself back to my room
I want you to take a look at my face
I want you to let me know I'm okay
This is my very last time requesting
your approval and honesty-
Please look at me
Please look at me
Please look at me
Tell me I'm okay
Tell me I'm okay
Tell me I'm okay
Am I going to be okay?
Am I going to be okay?
Hold me one last time
Cover my ears
I don't want to hear this anymore
Wipe my eyes
Wipe away the tears
Silent my fears away
Tell me I'm going to be okay.

VB, VM

Erica Gallagher (Alumni)

Virgin body
Vixen mind
Torn heart
One-of-a-kind
Contact-less
Bodily harm
Hold my hand
Grab my arm
Senseless
Sterile mind
Broken heart
Robb-ed blind.

Grandparents

Erica Gallagher (Alumni)

Butterscotch is a time and a place
Inside of my
Mother's Father's enormous hand
"Have a candy"
He said tempting my little tongue
And I refused
Then I gave in
Sucked it for twenty-three whole
Minutes.
Walked the area of the house
On what was a blustery noon
Could smell lunch being made up
By my Mother's Mother.

I Have a Gun

Erica Gallagher (Alumni)

I have a gun
And two hands
And five fingers on each one
Ten fingers in all
I have two eyes
And a kind of brain
But you'd never know it
Because I have a gun.

Rescued

Erica Gallagher (Alumni)

At last,
They took me in the warm room
Tucked me under equally warm sheets,
then blankets
Quilts and comforters
One large pillow for my dizzy head.
Just like us,
They have diet pop
And MTV
But they are realer
They are neater and nicer-
They'd never watch another bleed
Or kick another's stomach
They wouldn't rob another's possession.
At last,
They welcomed me in the realm
of themselves
Made me feel like I could be real with them
Love and joy and high hopes for a future
Far more pure than
any I've known back home.

Sound of Sadness

Erica Gallagher (Alumni)

Someone is whispering in your ear
They're making sure you hear
Loud enough so you can just about cry
If you can afford the tear.

Untitled
Jennifer Gebhardt

opaque, you see through
to what you
really mean,
to what you really
wished you could have
said. Unconditionally
they sought you, only
to be determined
at a later date
that you were not worthy.
transparently the wind
blows through, whistling
a tune that sticks
in your head for all eternity.
and all is tranquil
for the moment.
but at any time the
sea could turn
turbid, and you're
waiting for the moment
hanging onto an
oar in one hand and
a life preserver in the
other. Rocky times
surely lie ahead. but
are they inevitable?
must they come?
stop them if you
can. you only
have two hands
make a decision as to
what you're going to
hold onto, quickly now, before
waters overflow.
right now the
wind is gentle
and the water
glides slowly but
what are you
to do when
all else fails.
your oar breaks and
your life preserver
sinks.
time to grab a hold
but to what?
hallucinating you see a
shore in the distance.
choppy water lies ahead.
jump out now
or go for a ride
not knowing
where you'll
end up in the end.

Untitled
Jennifer Gebhardt

You hit the pavement with
an unseen amount of force.
your head bouncing slightly.
you gaze up into their
hate-filled eyes and listen to
their damning taunts.
the words come slower and
softer until you barely hear them
and you feel yourself start to
fall into a dark, fuzzy place.
you try to fight it but the dark

seems to be so comforting. . .
so you decide to stay for awhile
before long you've forgotten
how long you've been there
and you quit trying to break
free of the wretched place
so used to it you almost enjoy
your presence there
but there's something drawing
you back
something unexplainable
the light that once shone so
brightly wavers and goes out
never to reignite again

abnormalities
Jennifer Gebhardt

breaking glasses
shattering dreams

periwinkle
blue

a color that
whispers

look at me

I'm not periwinkle

Or see
Through

I SCREAM
OUT
LOOK AT ME!

Maybe I am
Electric
Blue

No Money
Jeff Gilleland

It's not too often I find myself completely happy. I think I think too much. People sometimes think my head is empty because at one time I was always altering my state of consciousness. If anything, experimenting with things such as drugs or sex, things that can be considered "illicit" or "wrong" have made me a better person. Thoughts in one's subconscious that we don't normally realize suddenly appear, shedding new light on everything around us. I have seen this light and have come back to describe its brilliance. A world all my own opened its doors to me and offered me many options. On one side I saw everything I never knew I wanted and on the other everything I knew I did not. Superman seemed pathetic, but the woman I was with could kill me with her stare.

The person who does not stray from the straight and narrow misses the entire point. An alternative state of mind is definitely not for everyone. However, analyzing someone else's pint of view can lead to the reaffirmation of your own. Running with blinders can get you sideswiped. Although I hate my opposition, it does me good not to push them aside. I listen to what they say.

In finances I am poor, but as long as I have my thoughts, I have much more than I even care to admit. I just wish I had more money to think about.

Humblers Strike Back

Hero Hartley

I think I spoke too soon. . .
Braggin' on
    Invincibly.

. . . . . Maybe Superman was too much—
— I should've went for a little extra man
or > average man . . . . . .

My vanity could stop a train,
    but it couldn't stop
the
  kryptodynamite
wired&planted
    in my backseat.

You Didn't Hear A Sound

Pam Giorgis

He whose house is burning
Thinks all the world's aglow
His neighbor, eating dinner,
May never even know.

And when my heart was lying
Shattered on the ground
I thought the world had ended
You didn't hear a sound.

affection notice

Hero Hartley

Dear _____,
    Currently,
        Your current drags me under.—, Under deep seas of stars and staged accidental confrontations.—, Confronted in awkward 8 millitime.
So cherished,
    but in the dark
        half the time.

From,
    me

of Marx and technology

Hero Hartley

yielding

,only,
to the unbelievable shapeable
of a
present issue.
-a reservation of humanity
built
on a
uniquely modern ailment.
Shall we take glad
this dismissal
of the fine line
[beg] between [innings]
[of]
skies and sKylInEs?
Can we blueprint a tower
to the heavens
and live with ourselves
when we get there?

Sartre

Hero Hartley

First,
I am.

I see
through a man's
eyes.

I make choices that effect
me
& the world around
me.
^^condemned to be free^^

Second,
I become.
[w/consciousness]

&sometimes,
am stranded
in bed
w/bedlam.

Take Care of Me

Chris Helin

Grow me a garden
or bake me bread.
Tuck me into
a warm, soft bed.
Read to me a timeless sonnet
stroke my hair - rest gentle hands on it.
Take away my darkest fears
hold my hand, dry my tears.
Give me something that can't be bought
Catch me a dream that's never been caught.
Sing me a song that stirs my soul
dismiss my shortcomings, deem me whole.

Turn a lion into a lamb-
I'm not the rock that you think I am.
Cherish me now for all that I do
Please give me, once, all I've given you.

Johnboy

Karen Henning (Alumni)

A headache swoons like swirling cold wind around my head when I have no winter hat on. It's one of those days that looks perfectly sunny and warm, when watching out a window from inside the house, but in reality it is quite cold outside. Returning from taking my neighbors golden retriever puppy for a walk, I check the answering machine to see if he's called. I know he won't, but somewhere inside is hope that he might. He hasn't spoken to me since July.

I met John on a blind date when I was sixteen years old. My friend Michelle set us up. We went bowling at Rival's, a bar and bowling alley, which was torn down about two years ago to make a parking lot. He was different, three years older than I, not conventionally good looking, but he was pleasing to my eye. John stood tall, brown hair and eyes. He wore tight jeans and cowboy boots, a collared shirt with a t-shirt underneath. I told Michelle he had a nice butt.

We started dating and went dancing twice a week at a country bar in Romeoville. John is an incredible dancer, light and easy on his feet, a natural. We spent quite a bit of time together, several months, turning the basement of his parents' house into his apartment. We put up two by fours, drywall, paint. I never did see the finished product until about a year after we broke up.

He just kept calling. After I told him I wouldn't see him anymore, John just kept calling, once a month at least. Eventually, I just stopped rolling my eyes and giving yes and no answers and actually started talking to him. It seems that since then, I just never shut up. We never shut up. Some friendships are so evolved that you forget how they ever got started. That described the friendship between John and I.

We hung out, smoked together, drank coffee, stayed up late, went to the movies, took his niece to Chuck E. Cheese's. We became part of each other's lives. John registered for college and started making plans for his future. I typed (and edited) all his papers for school. We took an upper level psychology class together and we both got A's. We encouraged each other and listened to each other. We were what friends ought to be.

The only problem was that John fell in love with me. Actually, I never really saw it as a problem. I just shrugged it off and let it be a part of our friendship, his wanting it to be more than that, me casually letting him hold my hand at Navy Pier. At times I really miss him. Only in looking back in this way do I realize how many things we actually did together, how much we shared. A sum total of four and a half years of having a best friend now can be only memories. I remember the time we danced in the moonlight down an old gravel road, the time we went to Zero Gravity and were the oldest

people there, our trip to Graceland. I remember more than I ever thought possible. Funny, my memory is awful . . . until it is my only link to a human being I love.

I look down at my hand and fidget with my engagement ring. I wonder if he knows I'm getting married. Would he smirk or sob if he found out? Mike is supposedly the reason he dumped me as a friend. Or a part of it, anyway. I can recall the night at Family Table when I told him I was seeing someone new again. He didn't look pleased. I said, "Guess what his name is?"

"Mike."

"Yup."

A look of boredom and disinterest sat on his face. I have an uncanny history of dating men named Mike. John failed to see the humor. Even that night there was not even the faintest belief that this Mike I started dating was the man I'd call my husband.

Our normal visits grew fewer and further in between. Two months later I quit smoking, kind of. I only smoked when with John. Another night at Family Table he accused me of using him to have a chance at a cigarette. I told him I was insulted by that. A month later John quit smoking and drinking coffee. That all but ended our four year habit of bonding over food, coffee, and smokes. I began spending all my extra time with Mike.

After calling and leaving several messages for weeks, with no response, I sent John a birthday card. I tend to think now that it, too, was a straw on his camel's back. I sent him my usual dreaded "friend" card. John hated those damned cards. He once told me they were like a slap in his face, a torment to him by me.

He finally wrote me a letter, a much expected letter, I guess. It never really surprised me. He told me he couldn't be my friend anymore. I had hurt him too much, and he couldn't take it any longer. He told me to take the love he has for me and remember him. And I have. Every week or so I think about him. I think about how he's doing, how his hairstyle has changed, if he's seeing someone.

I wonder if maybe he was the one for me and I just didn't want the easy route. His friendship was just too easy. My mother lectured me a time or two on friendships being the central basis of a marriage after the passion dies down. She loved John. At a time, she wished I could be attracted to him and marry him. But it just never happened that way.

He was above a boyfriend. He had passed the physical shit long ago, (except hugs). He was a confidante, and I saw ours as a relationship too far into friendship to ever become romantic again. His place in my life was higher than anyone I could date. Once, realizing that he was having problems with my not giving him a second chance to be a boyfriend, I offered that I would forsake our friendship, that if our being apart was better for him, I would do it. I just never thought he would really go through with it. Now, though, I can see how much it held us both back. I can see how I must have made his life hell, hearing all the stories about how in love I had been with shitheads. I never wanted to do that, to make him miserable. I love him. I miss him. I miss my best friend.

A One Day Affair
Cheryl Hiller

She saw you standing in the rain
waiting at the station for the next train
Eyes ice-blue, hair golden-brown-
Scoping out the girls all around
She was just a pretty thing you wanted
for a day
Nothing left between ya'
Nothing left to say

Stickman
Gina Hughes

His black leather pants were so tight and shiny as if the sun had melted them into a second skin. He was wearing trucker sunglasses, head phones, chains all over that jingled, and a small leather hippie band around his bald head. What was left of his hair was long and straggly and laid down his back. To me, he was the creation of too many hard drugs.

I had met stickman while waitressing. He always sat at the lunch counter and laid all of his shit out, taking up space for two people on each side. His shit included books on how to play tennis and how to be a better person, a can of tobacco, rolling papers, a buck knife, broken walkie-talkies, notepads, and the cup of coffee he ordered. After rolling his cigarette, he would cut the ends off with the buck knife, light it up, take one drag, and let it burn out in the ashtray. If you were lucky, he would grab his walkie-talkie and start screaming into it. I could never figure out what was funnier, stickman himself or all the customers staring at him with eyes and mouth wide open. Finally my boss kicked him out.

This is when he made appearances outside on the streets. Jamie and I saw him one day while driving. We hit the red light right next to his performance. Jamie honked the horn, and I gave him a cat call. He started dancing toward us stripper style like every woman wanted him. His arms were in the air twirling his drumsticks, and sometimes he would stop everything and point his sticks straight in the air. Green light go. As we drove away, I looked back at him still looking at us with this twisted smile on his face. He is definitely the oddest person I have ever seen.

Glacial Abuse
Susan Irvine

The ice cubes in the tray
Were connected as a result of someone
Filling it to the point of overflow
The corners of each clear-white square
Touching over the small dividers
I grabbed the tray hard
And twisted

Left wrist down
Right wrist up
To break the bond
But some exact measure of force
Sent the cold
Wet cubes
Hurtling out of their
Ice cube tray stalls
To bounce off my throat
Chest
Arms
Chilling me
Freezing just like his hands were
With fingertips cold enough
To convince me he had no soul at all

Carole

Susan Irvine

I remembered today the first time
    I sat across a table from you
Not knowing what you thought of me.
Not knowing if we would become a habit
    of each other, but
Hoping only that if nothing else,
    we could sit at the table for a long time
And the food came,
We ate,
And ditched out on the bill:
    at once bonding ourselves,
Never again would you be a stranger.

There are only so many words I can write
    about you without venturing into the
Realm of greeting card phraseology,
    trite lines about a
Best friend,

That doesn't even begin to describe you!
    No, we certainly aren't the
Best friends
We see around us, for missing is the envy
Missing are the petty arguments
And so heavily present
    are the feelings, words

Staying awake until the sun peeks
    through your doors
Lying on the couch
Not giggling, not gossiping, but
Conversing
In the literal sense, or
Sharing a table for coffee,
Discussing the things that no one else
    would take the time to address. . .

or singing along to songs we don't know—

Carole if I could describe the way I felt
when you bummed a smoke off my dad—
It's you nudging me further away
    from being a child, and
You
Simultaneously
Keeping alive the little girl in me

You
Strong enough that I can be happy
Without your being jealous,
And you
Being beautiful enough so that
It would be wretched to envy
I can only admire

Strong enough to share your strength and
Strong enough to pick me up
And
Fragile enough to cry, to trust me
with your tears

It's a rare girl that cries valid tears anymore...

Carole remember when
you read my tarot cards,
Carole remember when
we served slices of cake at your party
Carole remember when
we blew bubbles onto the pond
When we wrote a song

And sang songs to each other at the top
of our lungs. . .

Ray

Susan Irvine

Business at the liquor store is thriving
People wander through the store
perusing their choice of beer, wine or liquor
While the old, makeup-faced lotto
addicts stand in front of the counter
Shouting out their
"878 straight-box"
"1142 fifty-cent box"
and
"Gimme one for Wednesday's"
At anyone behind the counter
who will listen
And even those of us who won't
It doesn't matter—
They never win anyway.

They're a distraction
until the red-nosed alcoholics
Barge through the aisles, making
their way laboriously toward
The register,
Complaining about prices and burping
At anyone who will listen
And even those who won't,
Lotto addicts included.
prices don't matter anyway—
It's all holy water to them.

Everything's a cacophony
Kegs are being carted, full, out the door
And, emptied, back inside

Then Ray walks in.

That's probably not his name,
but someone nicknamed him the
Ray of Sunshine, long ago,
And it stuck.

His warm, chocolate-brown face
is smiling as he
Tips his hat
As gentlemen do
Toward Kim and me:
"Good evening, ladies,"
And we smile for the first time in hours
In accompaniment to our reply.

Ray gets a half-pint
of Old Granddad Whiskey,

Once a week or so,
And when asked how he is, he says,
(All the while smiling)
"Oh, I'm tired, ma'am"
And somehow it's not a complaint
But an honest statement because
When Ray's not cheering us up,
he's working.

"You work too hard," Kim says,
"And too long."
Ray doesn't disagree—how could he?
But merely says,
"If I don't work, I don't eat."
And we all know that's a fact.

So Ray tips his hat once more,
out the door, and says,
"You ladies have a lovely evening,"
With his crinkling beautiful eyes
and his smile
That's as warm as a glass
of whiskey going down
And pats Tom on the shoulder as
he's carting a keg out the door,
"You have a wonderful evening
and don't work too hard,"

And then he's out the door and in his car
On his way to make someone else smile
With his gentle brown face—
Almost the shade
of Old Granddad Whiskey,
Though softer—
And his bright eyes

Kim turns, with her first grin
for a lotto addict
And says,
"What'll it be?"

Circles

Chris Jablonski (Alumni)

The boy kicked his shoes off, caked with dirt and drying mud. He walked into the kitchen and climbed into one of the chairs, pulling off a wrinkled sock in the process. He held it up in front of him and sniffed it, wrinkling his nose and turning his head when he received its odor. After giving it one more sniff, he threw it on the kitchen table and got to work on the other sock.

Hearing his mother walk down the stairs, the boy hurriedly gathered his footgear and leaped out of the chair, his muddy jeans leaving dirty streaks on the white vinyl. His mother looked at him and sighed weakly. "William," she said. The boy figured he was in some sort of trouble unless she used the familiar 'Billy.' "William, come into the family room. We need to talk."

The boy started to get frightened. "What'd I do, Mom?" He asked, but she would give no clues. He followed her slower form down the small stairs, wanting to leap down them with his ten-year-old energy, but being forced to stay behind his mother. The boy surveyed the room as soon as he could see it. His father sat in one of the larger couches, half asleep. Two of his old siblings – he was the youngest in the family – sat on the floor, almost directly in front of the television until an angry look from their mother scrambled them onto a couch. The boy nervously sat at the other end of the couch from his father, who had begun lightly snoring but jumped as his wife turned off the television.

"William," his mother began and the boy groaned, "this is about your grades."

His grades! The boy had enough discipline to not let a grin fall on his face, but he was glad he wasn't in any trouble. His grades were always mediocre at best, but he knew they

hadn't slipped recently. "My grades?" He asked innocently.

His father coughed, then yawned. "Your teacher called. She says she's worried about you, uh, not catching on to things as fast as you should." His older brother and sister smiled cruelly. The boy hated them sometimes. "She says at this rate, you might not ever," he searched for the nicest way to say it, "uh, make it into college."

"That's fine. I don't even want to go to college," the boy shrugged. His siblings started to snicker. They were both in the honors program in high school. "You never went to college, Dad."

"Son, I want you to have every opportunity this country can offer you. I never went to college, and I work ten hours a day, hard labor. You want to do that? I . . . " the boy started to stare at the ceiling and not pay attention to his father as he went on and on. "Son?"

"Yeah, okay, Dad, I'll try to do better at school."

The young man kicked his basketball shoes off, slightly more scuffed up than when he bought them, but still looking new. Hearing crying from downstairs, he groaned. His stupid baby brother, probably, or his sister's two-year-old. He was starting to get sick of the house being so crowded all the time. At least his older brother was away at college. Noticing a hole in his sock, he groaned again. He had a date that night.

His older sister approached him as he sat on the stairs, pulling off his sock. Her young daughter tagged along behind her. "Billy," she started, but his head already snapped toward her.

"Will! I'm not Billy, anymore. I'm not, like, five years old or something."

"Fine, fine, Will, can you watch Brittany and Sammy tonight? Mom and I are going shopping for Christmas stuff."

He made an odd noise with his mouth. "Aughh! You know I can't. I'm going out tonight."

"You go out every night. This is important, and we can't find a sitter. Besides," she started with a smirk, "don't you have that big test tomorrow?"

The young man leaped up. "How come everybody always knows my school schedule?" He didn't add the fact that he forgot about the test. "It's like, I don't know, crazy, sometimes," he stormed off downstairs.

His mother was rocking the baby gently, singing to him, even though he had stopped crying. She looked up at the young man as he stormed past her. "Did Nicole tell you, you're babysitting? Where do you think you're going?"

"I have to put on new socks. I'm going out tonight."

"No, you're not, William. You have that big test tomorrow to study for, and I think some of those college applications are almost due. We tell you every night to fill them out, but you're always too busy."

The young man resisted an urge to scream in his mother's face. But, he didn't want the baby to cry. He hated those college applications, especially the one that had him write an essay about his life experiences. But, he knew his father would go completely crazy if he didn't do them, and he was in danger of failing math class if he didn't do well on the test. "Fine, Mom. I'll stay in tonight."

The young man sat down on his bed and untied his shoes carefully. They had cost him nearly a hundred dollars, and he still had three

more interviews this month. He looked at his brown socks in dismay as he realized the toes were different colors. At least nobody saw them. He loosened and took off his tie.

He reached for the remote control, but didn't turn on the television yet. He just listened. Loud footsteps from right outside his door and male voices yelling. Probably just freshmen playing floor hockey again. Through the thin wall into the next room, a guy and his girlfriend talking. A thump and more footsteps above him; who knew what went on upstairs?

The television came on, and the man sat and watched for about an hour, mindlessly changing the channels. He had studying to do, but he was too tired to do it now. He had the rest of the weekend.

The phone rang, and the man groaned and stood up eventually. "Hello?"

"Hi, it's me." It was his mother.

"Hi, Mom." He had been hoping it would be his girlfriend.

She asked about his internship interview, and how he was doing, as if he hadn't already been living on his own for three and a half years. She, of course, asked about his upcoming finals, and he reluctantly told her he hadn't studied for them yet, he was so busy with other things. But his grades had been good throughout college, and he would do as well this semester as any other. He then grudgingly asked about his niece and his younger brother, and they, of course, were doing fine, although Samuel's grades were slipping a bit. The man and his mother said their good-byes, and he hung up the phone.

A knock came at the door, and one of his friends stood at the other side, asking if he wanted to go grab a bite to eat. "Nah, I'll probably just order a pizza tonight. I've got finals to study for."

Later that evening, the man sat at his desk with a slice of pizza in his hand and his business management book in front of him. He wiped a salty drop of water from the page, smudging it a little.

An Untitled Novel
Chapter One

Mike Kalata

I could hardly believe that the crumpled piece of metal before me had been a car. I could still recognize the tires, the doors, the seats; but it was hard to believe that this thing before me was the same car which had been the object of my wife's desire less than two years prior. It must be the car, even after being in an accident, it still mocked me. It sat there with its shiny black finish knowing it was having the last laugh. It sat there in silence waiting for the moment that may never come when it would be brought back to life. I had no desire to bring this monster back to life. I had never liked it, and I believe it did not like me. It would live on in my nightmares taking a bite out of

my wallet for the next thirty-six months.

Bob, the Body Shop manager, showed me the car. He could not believe that no one was seriously hurt in the accident. Since my wife and I had been separated for ten months at the time of the accident and the accident had occurred two weeks earlier, I could only assure him that I had not heard of any major injuries. He allowed me to squeeze into the interior of the car. I remarked how clean it was inside. He laughed, "Yeah, she must have been a real neat freak. The trunk is spotless, also." I sifted through the few pieces of paper that were left in the glove compartment for some clues as to what happened, allowing them to fall to the floor, where I was certain they had been a month before. As I straightened up after unfolding myself from the car, I explained to Bob, "I'm the neat one, she couldn't stand it. This car, her car, was always knee deep with trash. I would make her clean it before I would even sit in it. She must have cleaned it in preparation for its repossession." "I supposed no one will want to repossess it now," snickered Bob. He knew the fact that it had sat on his lot for two weeks before anyone inquired about it meant that it was uninsured.

What Bob knew as fact had been careening recklessly through my thoughts, since I had heard that nothing had been done with the car for two weeks. When the accident happened, I was preparing to go out of town for business and did not concern myself with the details regarding the accident. My wife was not seriously injured and she had rented a car so that she could pick our daughters and would be able to get them to school and anywhere else they would need to go. She had assured me that she would take care of everything. Now, I was back from my business trip and still nothing had been done about the car. Where was the insurance company? Who was going to pay for the car? The loan company and I were the owners of the car, and I was the responsible party to the loan company. I was the one who signed his name to the loan documents.

Two years ago, my wife had been in another car accident and totaled the car she had been driving. She needed a replacement car. Since we were basically keeping separate lives at the time, I told her that my only opinion on the subject was that she should get a car she could afford. Well, it turned out that she couldn't afford any car. At least, I was led to believe that she could not be approved for a loan. She found a car, this car. It was a black, sporty number, with a sun roof, stick shift, and cassette player; everything a thirty year-old teenager could want. Unfortunately, she could not get it herself, so I agreed to sign the loan to buy the car. There was the obligatory innocent begging and pleading. "Please, please, can I have it? I'll take care of it. Make sure it has everything it needs. You won't have to raise a finger." She had every intention, I assume, to make good on her promises, but something, somewhere went wrong, terribly wrong.

Whenever I asked my wife about the car accident, she would get defensive and say that she hasn't heard from the insurance company. If she wasn't going to come clean, I would have to figure it out myself. Start at the beginning, the accident. I called the Sheriff's police who told who towed the car. The towing company told me where they towed the car, to the Body Shop. At the Body Shop, I learned that no one had asked about the car since it arrived. The next call is to my wife's insurance company, where I am informed that they know nothing of the accident and that she had been canceled for nonpayment some four months earlier.

Back at the Body Shop, I can't believe this

thing in front of me is a car. This crumpled, black piece of hatred is mine. The loan company doesn't want it. The Body Shop has started proceedings to classify it as abandoned and sell it for scrap. I can't afford to keep it. I can't afford not to keep it. I don't want it. It sits there mocking me knowing that I can do nothing to it. It has all the power. It controls me. It will be sold for scrap next weekend and I will continue to repay the loan to the loan company. I guess, you shouldn't invest too much of yourself in a car.

A Drink
Chapter 2
Mike Kalata

Joe walked Molly to the door. He enjoyed her flirting with him. He wondered whether or not she was really interested in him. She had flirted with him before when he was with Mary, but he was not available then. Once they were outside, he turned to her and said, "Are you flirting with me? Or do want something more?"

Molly said, "You surprise me. We used to flirt all the time, when you were a regular. Do you really want anything more than that? You're a nice guy, shouldn't you find some nice girl?" Molly led Joe toward her car parked in the corner of the parking lot.

"I thought I had found her, but she wasn't quite what she appeared. I wasted too many years. What I want is a relationship, a real relationship? I don't want to play games. I'm not as young as I used to be. I know what I want, I don't want to waste my time on people who don't know what they want," said Joe.

"I may not be as old as you are, but I'm older than I appear. I've been through a lot; I've had my fun, now I want something more. Are you what I'm looking for? I'd like to know more about you, but you always seemed out of my league," replied Molly.

Joe said, "I'm not in a different league. I'm just a guy trying to do what is right. I'm so tired of doing the right thing. I'm sick and tired of being walked over; having my heart ripped out and stomped on. Mary taught me that nice guys finish last. I don't want to be that cynical, but it's really hard not to be. Could you go out with a nice guy?"

Molly fished in her purse for her keys. She turned to unlock her car door. After she opened the door, she turned back to Joe and said, "I'd love to get to really know you." She climbed into the car and started the engine. She winked at him.

Joe stood by her car for a moment. He thought he should say something more, but he didn't want to commit to her, yet. He knocked on the window and indicated for her to roll down her window.

She rolled down her window and said, "Well? What's it going to be?"

Joe said, "I'd like to get to know you, also. How about dinner or something?"

"I'm off on Sundays," said Molly.

Joe said, "Were you thinking about tomorrow or next week?"

Molly smiled and said, "Tomorrow? I guess it is after midnight. Here is my number, give me a call after noon." She handed the slip of paper to Joe. She shifted the car into gear and pulled away slowly.

Joe was left standing in the parking lot. He looked back toward his pickup truck and saw Jerry leaving the restaurant. He thought that he should say something to him. He waved to Jerry to wait for him. He walked quickly back toward the door and to Jerry. He said, "I guess I didn't make it very far, yet."

Jerry said, "Are you up to go for a drink with me? There is still time before the clubs close." He smiled devilishly. He had plans.

Joe thought about his responsibilities; his kids, his work, his house, etc. Sick of it he said, "Hell, I don't drink much anymore, but let's go. One beer won't kill me. You driving? Please, don't say we're going to Boomers. I hate that place."

Jerry said, "I know you hate Boomers. I'm not too fond of that place anymore, either. I was thinking about 'The Cat's Club.' What do you think?"

Joe said, "Well, at least we won't run into Mary there; unless something's changed."

Jerry led Joe toward his car. It was a dirty blue sedan. "It isn't much, I know. But it's mine and it'll get us where we want to go," said Jerry. Jerry pushed things off the seat to the floor to make room for Joe. He started the car and quickly turned the heat on.

Joe jumped into the car. He had been out in the cold longer than he had realized talking to Molly and then Jerry. "I hope it warms up quickly," he said.

Jerry replied, "Don't worry it won't be long before we're at the club and it's always warm in there. Even if there was no heat in the building, it would feel very warm inside." He laughed.

Joe laughed with Jerry . It was a nervous kind of laugh. He thought, why am I going to a strip club with my ex-lover's new boyfriend? "You know, I don't think I have any singles," he said.

Jerry replied, "I think you can get change, besides the larger bill, the more you get." He smiled knowingly. He gunned the engine, threw the car into gear, and pulled out of the parking lot. "We're here," he said.

Joe jumped out of the car. He wasn't sure if he was in a hurry to get inside or to get out of the car. Jerry drove recklessly, and he was thinking about how the ride back to the restaurant was going to be after a few drinks. He needed to get the keys from Jerry. "Do you want me to be the designated driver? I could have just one drink," he said.

Jerry thought about it for a minute and then said, "That is probably a good idea. I feel like letting loose a bit." He flipped the keys to Joe.

Joe caught the keys and slipped them into his pockets. "Let's go."

They walked toward the club doors. At the door, the bouncer was collecting the cover charge. Jerry paid the cover. Inside the lighting was dimmed, the air was musty. A host greeted them and pointed them to a table to the right of the runway. Once they were seated, a waitress came over and they ordered two beers.

Joe was like a kid. He was scared to show too much enthusiasm or to show any guilt. With both eyes focused on the stage, Joe said to Jerry, "Do you come here often?" He thought, I must be out of my mind.

Jerry sat with his eyes focused on the stage and his mouth slightly opened to accept his beer which never seemed to make it up to his mouth. Suddenly he seemed to awaken from his stupor, he turned to Joe and said, "I come here when Mary is doing her own thing and we're not getting along. How did you stay with her for such a long time?"

Joe felt a kinship with Jerry. They were both under Mary's spell. Joe said, "I'm not sure why I stayed with her. Maybe, for the children; maybe, for the way it looked; maybe, it was

the sex; maybe, I loved her. In the end, I felt trapped. But I can't answer that question either. You don't seem to be happy with her either. Why are you sticking with her? You know, I don't know that I wouldn't take her back if she made the first move."

"Don't do it. I can't imagine my life without her, but I can't go on like this. I'm sure you know how I feel. I feel betrayed by her. At the same time, like I said I can't imagine being without her," said Jerry. Looking at the stage, "Do you think she's attractive?"

"What? Yes, she's attractive in a cheap sort of way. I'm almost ashamed to say it but I'm much more attracted to the plain, girl-next-door type of woman. Now, that girl over on the left side of the stage is attractive," said Joe.

"I'm much more of a bust man and I'm not so much into that wholesome look. That's pretty obvious since Mary isn't the wholesome girl you knew. I love her. But, you know, she still loves you," Jerry said.

Joe choked on his beer as he stammered, "What? What are you talking about?"

"She loved the stability that you provided to her life. She would still be with you if she could only get over her own stubbornness. She wouldn't admit it, but the way you finally stood up to her for yourself really turned her on. She talks about you all the time and compares everything to the way you did things," said Jerry.

"I don't think she really wants to be with me. She only wants what she doesn't have. That's the way she was when we were together. Besides, it's not my job to provide stability in her life. She never had a stable life to begin with and her childhood was rough. Her father wasn't very protective of her. Her mother died after leaving her father. Then, her stepmother was not the best mother. I'm not her parent. We'll never get back together," said Joe.

"Why didn't the two of you get married?" asked Jerry. He ordered another beer, as he chugged down the rest of his second bottle of beer.

Joe said, "If we would have married, nothing would have changed other than the fact that we would have had to go through more legal hoops. She didn't want to be married. Her parents' marriage didn't work. She thought that marriage wasn't a good idea. She needed to grow up. Have the two of you talked about getting married?"

"She wants to get married. She thinks it would be a great way to move our relationship to the next level. I think she just wants to get married to possibly get custody of the kids, and use my credit background; but I may be wrong," said Jerry.

Joe said, "Wouldn't it be worth it to marry Mary just to wake up next to her? I know I would give up a lot to wake up next to her just once more." He thought that Jerry would see through his attempts to get information from him. "Straight-up, are the two of you getting married or what?"

"Absolutely, positively, not, if I can stick to my guns. If I can just hold to my position, then we'll be split-up soon," said Jerry. "But I'm sure you know, that it's not very easy to stand up to Mary."

The lights in the club gradually brightened. Joe stood up. Jerry remained seated. Joe said, "I think it's time to go."

Jerry said, "I didn't see the show. You kept me talking about that slut all evening. Why did I invite you along? Did I invite you? I must have drank too much."

Joe surveyed the table. There were about ten bottle on the table. Joe had nursed one beer for the entire evening. Joe said, "You've had enough. How do you feel? Should we get some coffee?"

"Let's. Where are my keys? Did I give them

to you?" asked Jerry. "I can't believe that I've said what I have tonight."

Joe grabbed Jerry's arm and steered him toward the door. Joe had thought Jerry was sober until the lights came up. Jerry was very lucid while the two of them had been talking. Joe walked with Jerry to the car. He said, "I'm really glad we did this."

"I think you're great, Joe. I love you, man," said Jerry.

"Now, you're getting out of control. Just get in the car and open the window," Joe said. He walked around the car and got behind the wheel. "How are you feeling?"

Joe saw that Jerry appeared to have fallen asleep. Joe drove Jerry's car back to the restaurant. While he was driving, he thought about how good he felt about himself after talking to Jerry. He hoped that he wasn't feeling good at Jerry's expense. As Joe turned into the parking lot, he wondered what he was going to do with Jerry. He couldn't let him drive, he couldn't leave him alone. Joe saw Mary's car in the parking lot of the restaurant. Should he leave Jerry with her, he thought.

Joe parked the car and reached over and shook Jerry. Jerry bolted up and hit his head on the roof. Joe said, "Easy. We're here. Do you want to go inside? Mary's in there."

Jerry sat back. He took a deep breath of the cold air from the open window. He said, "I need some coffee. I don't care if Mary's in there. I need to confront her."

"Do you want me to go in with you? I can if you want," said Joe. He hoped that Jerry wouldn't want him to go in with him because he didn't want to face Mary tonight.

"Please. I need your support to make it past Mary," said Jerry.

Joe got out of the car and walked to the passenger side to let Jerry out. He closed the door behind Jerry and locked it. He looked inside the restaurant to see if Mary had noticed their arrival. She had not. He saw her sitting at a booth by the window. She was laughing and carrying on. He felt very jealous of her carefree attitude. Joe and Jerry entered the restaurant and asked for a table. They were seated before Mary even realized that they were there.

Grading Connie

Bonnie Kodrick

Connie sat staring at the large red "C" at the top of the abnormal psychology exam. Many of her classmates had gotten far-worse grades, but Connie was imagining Mr. Fisher dying with that damned red pen gripped in his gnarled hand. Connie had sat hunched over her textbook and notes for weeks, ignoring housework and husband. Now Fisher had stamped her best with a "C", proclaiming her "average." Her academic record would be scarred by that obtrusive letter. She was unaware of what the professor was saying for the remainder of the class period, gratefully escaping to the solitude of her minivan for the 25-mile drive back to Corrisville.

Connie remembered when she had decided to return to school. She had sent Catherine off to college with the knowledge that her daughter would rarely return for a visit. Her husband, Bill, was absorbed in the contracting business he had established after opting for early retire-

ment from the utility company. Connie was obligated to give an occasional dinner party and keep the Pomeranian brushed. Her friends were becoming stuck in gossip-talk, and Connie avoided the sell-you-something parties and coffee-cup mindless chatter, preferring "Jeopardy" to the soap operas. Connie read so many books and articles that she often could not recall the plots, or she would intertwine information from different sources as she conversed with her husband's business associates. It sometimes bothered Connie that these powerful people would not notice her confusion and seemed to agree with her mistakes.

But that damned "C" made her angry! Old Fisher directed all of his questions to the 20-year-olds in the class, ignoring any hand that had a few wrinkles and age spots. Connie persisted in raising her hand, even though she was never called upon to contribute to the class discussions. She was always prepared for class, and her fascination with the material led to an easy memorization. So what was so flawed in her logic that the old goat would throw a "C" on top of her exam?

It was starting to rain. Connie could be home by 3 p.m., but she was thinking about stopping at WalMart for some beauty supplies. Now there was a misnomer, since it was more like lack-of-beauty supplies. Connie's brother-in-law had kidded her about an order she had placed for custom makeup at Marshall Fields, saying that he didn't know it came in industrial strength. Connie had laughed with the rest of the family, but she was becoming more aware of the wrinkles which had settled around her mouth and eyes.

But that damned "C" would be a permanent reminder that her best wasn't good enough for . . . for what? The class had confirmed much of what she had gathered from experience, and the remainder had been concerned with problems that she would probably never confront. She did not envy those tortured minds that dwelt in dark places where no light would ever penetrate. She could not imagine taking drugs in order to attempt some degree of normalcy in a world where no one was quite sure of what normal was anyway. Connie had learned years before that normal could not be drug induced.

Connie smiled as she recalled her "flower-child" years, filled with daisies and freedoms. She still had a pair of bell-bottoms in an old trunk in the attic, hanging onto them as though they were as precious as the wedding dress which was carefully folded on top. Shoved into one of the pockets of the rain-washed, sun-bleached jeans was a string of lovebeads given to her by someone with long hair and intense eyes. Connie smiled as she recalled the nights spent staring up at stars with no commitments pulling her toward home and no thoughts of tomorrow being anything other than glorious. Connie had thought that she could learn more from exploring the earth and others than she could learn in classrooms from withered professors.

WalMart's parking lot was almost full, and Connie was unable to find a parking spot in the handicapped section. All the old folks must have gotten their Social Security checks and were out buying diapers and syringes. Connie would have to use her cane since she had to walk so far. She despised the looks she received when she carried the cane with her, but the lack of feeling in her left leg made it difficult to walk without the cane's support. Once inside, she could lean on the shopping cart, but the forced long walk would demand that she rely on the cane to get into the store. She sat staring at the cane for a moment before she opened the door. Damned thing, how she despised needing its assistance!

Connie didn't see anyone she recognized

inside WalMart. She was thankful for that, since the damned "C" kept popping into her thoughts, distracting her into anger. If Connie could figure out what she did wrong on the exam, she could at least straighten it out in her own mind. But Fisher had not written any comments on the paper — he had just written that damned "C" across the top.

Connie didn't have much in the cart as she headed toward the checkout line. She was debating whether or not to write a check when she heard, "Well, hello there, Connie. I haven't seen you in ages!" being spoken loudly from about 20 feet away. Connie turned toward the noise and groaned inwardly when she recognized Trusy something-or-other. So many of those women had unpronounceable maiden names, and they were usually coupled with first names found on second-grade lunch boxes.

"Hi, Trusy. Is Jim with you?" Connie always asked about Jim, wondering if Trusy had any idea what a unique man her husband was. Connie questioned why Trusy would have taken Jim for granted for almost 25 years.

"No, he took Jimmy to the football game. I don't know how they can sit through that stuff, and I certainly don't want to be within two miles of Cheryl Tonny! You heard what she did to Lorraine last week, didn't you? Well, during the meeting at . . ." Connie switched her hearing off at this statement, but continued to nod her head and interject an occasional "Oh!" when Trusy came up for air.

Connie was thinking of rearranging the cabinets in the kitchen when, " . . . and I just can't believe she had that much gall!" Trusy at last concluded her story, leaving Connie with an opening escape. Connie exchanged the usual "We'll do lunch" and got the hell out of there.

It had stopped raining when Connie left WalMart. It was almost four-thirty! She'd been trapped longer than she realized, and she threw the packages into the back seat as she dragged her leg into the van. She would have to hurry if she was going to make that cheesecake for the dinner party. She hoped that she wouldn't have to dash back to the store for some forgotten ingredient.

Connie's mind settled on Jim. She could still sense the questions in his eyes when he delivered last year's tax returns to her. Jim was an accountant who preferred numbers to words, and the attraction she felt for this quiet, intelligent man was rooted in her daisy-days. She and Jim were bound together by flower-power and Volkswagons, but he had abandoned her for Oklahoma University.

The damned "C" returned. She had kept the exam folded inside her book bag, and now she pulled it out to review it once more. She still could not find the error in her logic, so she refolded the exam into a sloppy square, once more uttering obscenities which were unfamiliar to her. Perhaps someone else could help her figure out what was wrong with her logic. Perhaps she would call Jim tomorrow . . .

i hug better than trophies

I.denver Magenta

She's coffee 'round
lots, Like peddling
backwards she likes to hang
w/ la-la-la
guys and play
oOh-Ooh games.

I k now.
I used to play them, too.
She plaid them 2.

riding 'round
tables,
she sings with a cold
and plays to the old
-the way she was taught to.
^^^^^^^doesn't look for
spespecial
~~just lOOks for someone.

Untitled

David McCord

I still kill
I still destroy
I have been deadly
since I was boy

I am strong
I am smart
but I lack one thing
I lack a heart

i feel nothing when
Animal's lives i take
when God made me
He made a Mistake

i am no better than
the Animals of every land
but still, everyday,
They die by my hand

i destroy and kill
without remorse
for World destruction
i am the source

i am man
i forever roar
the world is doomed
until i roar no more

Mind Control

Ann Sluis (Alumni)

You think you know me just by looking
in my eyes,
But they tell you nothing
because there is nothing to find;
Some say that they are a window to the soul,
all lies,
Don't venture too deep into my sea,
you're as good as blind.
Some say they are a mirror into your own
soul, but fools don't realize,
That they are a portal into the manipulating
evils of the mind;
Some people speak of a mystique,
the eyes' power to hypnotize,

Watch yourself, don't underestimate
when mine and yours are aligned;
You think you know me just by looking
into my eyes,
But watch out, they can lead to servitude
of the mind.

Shadow of a Dream

Ann Sluis (Alumni)

Running, flying
Shades of red
Nightmarish invasion of my head;
Sitting, sighing
Thought goes dead
As I long to go to bed.
Jumping, screaming
Shadows beckon
Just to mark my return;
Lying, dreaming
Shadows rise
And bring me to my crash and burn.
Surrounded, trapped
In the gallows
A prison created by fears;
Crying, strapped
Held in place
And they have surmounted for years.
Tormented, seized
As shadows lurk
And envelope the core of my soul;
Reaching, very unappeased
The shadows work
To take my heart and my self-control.
Rising to the surface
Gasping for my breath;
Thank God I got out when I did.
The shadow is my death.

Exhausted

Ann Sluis (Alumni)

I feel a rage inside my soul,
Pent up emotions want to explode;
My only pursuit, my only capture,
Is a poem full of emotion and rapture.
I'm sick of devotions
Too hard to express,
Too many emotions I can no longer suppress.
I'm sick of the hurting
Tired of the fears,
Too weak for doubting and all out of tears.
Sitting and listening
The world goes by,
A dream of forever
Without a reply.

No Sale

Ann Sluis (Alumni)

Sitting, waiting
Hesitating
Never cease my
Salivating
Longing, dreaming
Always screaming
Crying, balling
Feels like falling
Dying, walking
Always talking
Thinking, hoping
Never coping
Something lost, then something found
Was just my tears upon the ground
Sighing, writing
Now nail biting
Wishful typing,
Now I'm griping
Eating, sleeping
Always weeping
Banging, kicking
Time is ticking
Reaching, losing
My heart is bruising
Wanting, staring
Lights are glaring
Wishing, trying
But he's not buying
So running, leaving, gone,
My whole life along.

Chapter 5
Grammar School
(From her memoir)

Evelyn Smith

Mrs. Balfour: "Okay, everybody, the party's over. It's time to go home."

Mr. Balfour (mortified): "Wait, wait a minute, Bessie! You can't dismiss our guests like that."

Mrs. Balfour: "Nonsense! The party is over, everyone . . ."

The Balfours had just celebrated Cindy's fifth birthday. When Mr. Balfour had seen the guests out and thanked them for coming, he carried the third-hand bike down the front steps and placed it on the street. He addressed its new owner, "Let's see what you can do, Cindy."

Cindy: "I'm not gonna ride here, Dad. I'm goin' down by the match-me-if-you-can bush."

Mrs. Balfour: "Why do you like that English bush?"

Mr. Balfour: "And, why do you call it an English bush?"

Mrs. Balfour: "Because it's red."

Mr. Balfour: "Well, you'd better be careful about calling a country red today, unless, of course, you're talking about Russia."

Linda: "But, Dad, England is colored red on all the maps."

Mrs. Balfour: "Yes, indeed it is. And, when

I was a school girl in Ireland, I could see that Ireland was colored green on my map. It was obvious to me that Irish trees and grass were very green. So, I believed that since England was red on my map, the grass and trees there would be red. So, calling a red bush English, is a private joke which allows me to chuckle at the child I once was."

Mr. Balfour: "That's an amusing story. It brings a smile to those dark eyes of yours."

Cindy: "I'm not goin' to the match-me-if-you-can bush because it's red; I'm goin' there 'cause it makes a soft cushion to land on."

The family walked down the street to the O'Brien house. There, a row of dense bushes formed a hedge between the public street and the private lawn. This hedge was taller than a tall man, and, since it was never pruned, it was as wide as it was tall. It's branches devoured a two-foot strip of the road.

Linda (picking a red leaf off the hedge): "Bet ya I can find a match." As the others watched, she compared her leaf to others on the bush. Although the leaves all looked similar, on close inspection, their singularities were pronounced. It was not just minor differences in their serrated edges; but, the leaves also had major differences in the numbers and sizes of their lobes. "I give up. There are no two alike. Let's see you fall off my old bike, Cindy."

Mr. Balfour had refurbished the bicycle and lowered its seat as far as possible, but Cindy still could not touch the ground with her feet while seated. Starting was scary. She placed her right foot on the right pedal and put all her weight there. Pushing off with her left foot, she wobbled toward the bush, toppling into it before she could raise herself into sitting position.

Mrs. Balfour: "Don't reinjure those scabs on your knees; you're going to have permanent scars. Also, I don't want any brush or blood stains on your clothes."

Mr. Balfour (pulling Cindy out of the bush and setting the bike upright): "Here, try again."

At this point, the Balfours were aware of a clicking noise in the street. It was Charlotte. She had changed from her party dress and now wore a white tennis dress and visor. She rode past on her bicycle, not speaking to or acknowledging anyone. Tennis anklets sported tiny, puffy-white balls at the back of her tennis shoes. A tennis racket protruded from her basket. The sound effect was made by a playing card. It had been attached with a clothes pin to her front wheel. As the spokes rotated, the card clicked against them. Click, click, click resounded as Charlotte rode back and forth.

Mr. Balfour: "Robin, did the Maxwells join the Coral Sands Tennis Club?"

Robin: "No, none of the Maxwells are interested in playing tennis, especially not Charlotte."

Mr. Balfour: "Ah, yes, she does look mighty fine in that outfit."

This time, Cindy wheeled her bike until the right pedal was in a high, forward position. As she pushed off with her left foot, she then quickly shifted all her weight to her right foot. This pushed the right pedal down and propelled

the bike forward. Then, she shifted her weight to her left foot. This resulted in a second thrust. She was picking up speed rapidly when she hit a sandy patch in the unpaved road. Her wheels lost traction in the loose sand, but, by shifting her weight, she maneuvered another soft landing in the match-me-if-you-can bush.

Mr. Balfour: "Well, if it hadn't been for the sand, you would have cruised right on down the street. And, I have good news for all of you. There'll soon be a paved road down the center of the Island. At both US bases, Army and Navy recruits have been assigned to working crews. They're on standby for the go-ahead to tarmac the road connecting the two bases. Winston Churchill is all-for a continued US presence on this mid-Atlantic island. He's encouraging the Bermuda Government to allow the road-paving project."

Robin: "When the road is paved, will you be allowed to have a car, Dad?"

Mr. Balfour: "Not so fast, young lady! Let's go one step at a time. Bermudians are not going to allow America to dictate to them. They are wary of US domination.

Later that night, Mrs. Balfour tucked the three girls into their beds with a: "Goodnight, sleep tight. Don't let the bed bugs bite."

Once the lights were out, the chit-chat began.

Robin: "Cindy, do you know that you're now two years older than Sally? Yesterday, she was three and you were four. It's fine to have a friend who is one year younger than you, but today Sally is two years younger than you. Your friends are going to tease you if you play with a three-year-old baby. I think you should find some friends your own age."

Cindy was intrigued with this logic! Her five-year-old brain now possessed an exciting bit of grown-up mathematics. First thing in the morning, she would go to Sally and explain it. Sally would undoubtedly be very impressed with the grandeur and maturity of Cindy's reasoning.

As they spoke, the sisters could hear the ping-pong of table tennis coming from the house next door. It was Sally's teenaged brother, Marty, playing with his friends. The girls stood on their beds and peered out the windows. From their vantage points, they looked directly into the basement windows of Marty's rec room. Ping-ping-pong, ping-ping-ping-pong: Marty was playing with Brian, Tootsie and Ian.

The four boys went to school together. Since they had failed to gain entrance to the Bermuda Boys' Grammar School, they attended the Catholic School run by American nuns. After the girls had watched the ping-pong game for a while, they snuggled into their beds once more.

Cindy had had an exciting day. She was tired. Her favorite birthday gift was on the night stand beside her bed. Its white ivory reflected light that entered the room from the hallway. The statue of three monkeys came from the faraway village of Nikko in Japan. The five-year-old reached out and ran her fingers over its cool, smooth surface. The three monkeys were to see, hear, and speak no evil. One hid its eyes with its hands. A second monkey covered its ears, and the third, its mouth.

Cindy announced the please-be-quiet-it's-time-to-go-to-sleep signal: "Silence in the courthouse. The monkey wants to speak."

Anyone who spoke after that would be accused of being a monkey. No one was found

guilty; all three fell asleep to the gentle sound of ping-pong.

The next day, Robin and Linda left early for the Bermuda Girls School. Cindy would have to wait until September to join them. On that Monday morning, she went directly to Sally's house. Once the two girls were together, Cindy launched into mathematics: "I can't play with you now 'cause you're jus' a three-year-old baby, an' I'm five. In July when you have your fourth birthday, I'll come to your party, and we can be best friends again. Don't you know? On your birthday, I'll still be five and you'll be four, so I'll be just one year older than you again. Tell your mother I want chocolate cake and ice cream at your birthday party!"

Sally was expressionless; she looked as though her friend had made meaningless noises.

Cindy left the Tucker house thinking about the grand party that would welcome her back. She collected her bike from the back porch, clunked it down the stairs, and pushed it down the street.

As the young girl approached the match-me-if-you-can bush, Tinky, younger brother to Tootsie, appeared at his hedge on the opposite side of the street. "Don't you want to ride my trike, Cindy?"

"Not anymore, Tinky. Look at this bike I got for my birthday. Why don't you get a two-wheeler?"

"My mother says it's too dangerous."

"You wanna ride mine?"

"No. I'm not allowed to play in the street."

"I saw your brother playing ping-pong at Marty's last night."

"Well, when I'm sixteen, like Tootsie, I'll go out at night and play ping-pong too."

"Look, Tinky, you have hornets in your hedge. Can I come and look for the nest?"

"Yes."

"Well, I'm riding my bike today. I'll come tomorrow. Bye."

As the youngest Balfour girl stood in the street getting ready for push-off, another voice called to her, "Cindy." Cindy looked around. The street was deserted. Tinky had disappeared, and there was no one in sight. She thought she had imagined the voice; but then, it spoke again even louder, "Cindy." It sounded like Pat's voice. Cindy dropped her bike and stepped onto the concrete path that formed a gap in the O'Brien's hedge. She walked along the yard side of the hedge looking for the owner of the voice. "Cindy." It was clearly Patrick O'Brien's voice! "Pull back the branches of the hedge, Cindy." Cindy separated the branches and peered into the hedge. Once her eyes had adjusted to the darkness, she could see a large clearing inside the hedge. "Come in my hideout," said Pat.

What a magnificent hideout he had! Cindy pushed her way into the bush. "Who else knows 'bout this place?" she asked.

"No one knows 'bout it. And don't you dare tell no one! 'cause I'm gonna be a spy when I grow up, and I don't want anyone to 'spect I'm spyin' on people. Now, you wanna play the new game I made up?"

"Yes," Cindy replied. She needed a new friend, and Pat was five, just like she.

As Pat explained the game, Cindy had second thoughts. But, after all, she was five. They were going to take off all their clothes to see if they were a good match. Cindy sat on the ground and unbuckled her shoes. She removed them and then her socks. Next, she pulled her sweater over her head and dropped it on the ground. Then she struggled to reach the buttons on the back of her dress.

"What's the matter, Cindy?"

"I can't take off my dress."

"Why not, scaredy-cat?"

"I can't undone my buttons."

"Well now, I'll take care of that."

"No you won't, 'cause I changed my mind."

It was already evident to the five-year-old girl that they were not a good match. Pat had a little imperfection. It was a thing that dangled in front of him. This game was dumb, and boys were stupid! Cindy quickly put back on her socks, shoes and sweater. She pushed her way out through the hedge and, lost in thought, headed for home. That thing! What a shame. Even with his clothes on it would be a visible bump. Perhaps Pat's parents would take him to the doctor and have it cut off.

But then Cindy remembered something; parts of conversations from Marty's rec room drifted into her consciousness. The boys' words had been meaningless to her last night, but now they came to her — dangling modifiers. That was it! Boys had dangling modifiers. Cindy skipped the rest of the way home.

When she arrived, Mrs. Balfour was scouring the oven. She looked up at Cindy and asked, "Did you bring your bike up the stairs?"

"No."

"You go right this minute and get your bike up the stairs."

"I'm going to get Sally to help me."

The five-year old knocked on the Tuckers' door. As Cindy entered the house, Mammie, smiled and pulled a red leaf from Cindy's hair. "Chile! Vut you done? You done crash yoh bike in dat match-me-if-you-can bush?"

"Yes, Mammie, and now I need Sally to help me push my bike back up the stairs."

When Sally appeared, the two girls acted as though the morning's conversation had never occurred. They collected the bicycle from where it lay, in the middle of the street. Together they managed to push it back up the stairs and into the Balfours' back porch. As they went, Cindy excitedly explained dangling modifiers to Sally.

"I know 'bout they, Cindy. Marty talks 'bout dangley modifers. I've seen his 'cause Mother won't let wet towels out the bathroom, an' he forget his clothes when he take a bath. It's a imperfect that boys have." The two wordly-wise girls nodded in agreement.

Cindy didn't care about age difference anymore. Since boys were dumb and played stupid games, she preferred coloring in books with Sally.

That night after dinner, as Dad read the newspaper, Cindy asked, "Dad, will I learn about dangling modifiers at the girls' school?"

Mr. Balfour: "No, I don't think so. If you were going to an American college, you would have to know about them in order to pass the Asset Tests. But you're going to an English school for young ladies. You may go to college in England some day. But, don't worry; you'll learn about split infinitives instead."

"Dad, Mr. Tucker says that there are flying saucers with Martians in them. Is it true?"

"It's possible. However, the US has a secret service called the CIA. Some of those unidentified flying objects may be spy planes taking photos. And what do you think the Navy does? Do you think American sailors are here to drink rum swizzles and oogle at pretty girls under the palm trees? Or, do you think they may be watching for Russian submarines off the coast? The CIA may even encourage false rumors to protect their espionage activities."

"Yes, it's true 'bout the submarines, Dad. I heard Charlotte's big sister say the sailors like

to take her to the beach to watch the submarine races on moonlit nights."

"So, that's what Nicole is up to! Well, I'm going to look into tennis lessons for you three. I think it is your bedtime, young lady. Is Mom fixing tea?"

Mrs. Balfour: "Yes, tea is coming. Cindy, go fetch your sisters. Robin, come slice this Irish soda bread. Linda, you spread butter on it."

Mr. Balfour: "Well now, Cindy, what will it be tonight — a nice cup of tea or a cup of nice tea?"

Cindy: "I'm going to have a pretty cup of nice tea, 'cause I'm gonna ask Mom if I can use one of them Chinese cups with the gold dots on it."

Linda: "Well, you can't, Cindy brat 'cause you're already spoiled rott'n."

Cindy: "Mom, can we use the Chinese cups?"

Mrs. Balfour: "No, they're for company. These plastic mugs from the Piggly Wiggly are good enough for you."

Robin: "Well, Dad, it looks like we're going to enjoy our Ceylon tea in colorful plastic mugs tonight."

Linda: "Dad, now that you're an American citizen, do you still like this Irish soda bread?"

Mr. Balfour: "Of course, I do. It's part of my Irish heritage, and I'm very proud of my background."

Linda: "Well, I just want you to know that my friends say you have to be Irish to swallow this bread."

Mrs. Balfour: "Don't be rude, Linda."

Linda: "I'm only telling you the facts of life. Normal people don't eat soda bread."

Mrs. Balfour: "You always have to have the last word, don't you?"

Linda: "I try, but with you around it's difficult."

Mrs. Balfour: "Now girls, eat up and go to bed. I'll come in a few minutes to tuck you in."

The next afternoon when the after-school crowd had gathered to play Kick-the-Can, Cindy informed them about the hornets' nest.

Peggy: "OK gang, let's ask Mrs. Balfour if we can borrow her broom to go look at the hornets' nest. (Knocking on the Balfour's door) Mrs. Balfour, may I borrow your broom?"

Mrs. Balfour: "What do you want the broom for, Peggy?"

Peggy: "Um, umm, we're going to umm, umm . . . play witch."

Mrs. Balfour: "Yes, I'll lend you my broom. Don't break it, and bring it back as soon as you're done."

Peggy: "Yes, Mrs. Balfour." As she walked away from the door she yelled, "Hey everybody, I've got the broom. Let's go look at the hornets' nest."

Six girls hurried down the street to Tootsie and Tinky's house. There, high in the hedge, Robin spotted a muddy-brown nest. Peggy poked at it with the broom. Startled hornets flew from the nest; one made a beeline for Sally and stung her on the neck. An initial redness was soon followed by a swelling lump.

Sally: "It's Martians. It's Martians. I've been bit by a Martian. We've been invaded! A flying saucer has landed in the bushes. A Martian came and bit me." She ran away.

Tootsie appeared: "What's all the screaming about?"

Cindy: "Sally thinks it's Martians. Standing right over there in that corner of your yard, wearing a yellow sweater and red trousers, it was a hornet that stung Sally."

Tootsie: "Well, I've seen Mr. Tucker's magazines, and what you described sounds more like a Martian than a hornet. The hornets in our hedge have never stung me. Say, Peggy, what's the broom for?"

Peggy: "We're playing witch."

Cindy: "It wasn't a Martian; Martians don't look like that."

Tootsie: "How do you know, Cindy? You've never seen a Martian. You probably think they are little green men. Well, who knows? They may be red and yellow."

Cindy: "Well, my Dad sez the See-I-Aye has spy planes; and, I think it was a 'Merican spy plane. Look across the street! See there's a bunch of bugs swarming around O'Briens' red bush. And, . . . aren't 'Mericans interested in dangling modifiers?"

Tootsie: "Hold it, Cindy, you're all mixed up. Those are not the spy ships of Martians or Americans. And, you better forget about that espionage stuff. The war is over; no one spies anymore. They're hornets over there . . . but, you're right about Americans being interested in dangling modifiers. Sister Marguerite has explained them to us. Do you want me to dangle a modifiers so you can see what it looks like?"

Cindy: "No, I'm only interested in split affinitives."

Tootsie: "Split what?"

Charlotte: "Oh, she means split affinitives. I know what split affinitives are. A split affinity is when I'm in love with two boys at once and don't know which one I love the most."

Robin: "Yes, a split affinity is a love triangle."

Tootsie: "And you girls should not split your affinities. But American nuns are different, they can split their affinitives. Sister Luisa, my math teacher, says affinity is a very large number, more than the number of grains of sand on the beach. And, you know what? She can split it, and when she does, the pieces are still very large."

Cindy had lost interest in affinities and was talking to the red bush, "Pat, Pat, are you there? Do you see any 'Merican spies?"

"Cindy, get the hell away from my bush! Meet me tomorrow morning at the banana tree and I'll tell you. Now, get lost."

Robin: "Who are you talking to Cindy?"

Cindy (her hands covering her ears so that she would not hear any more evil four-letter words): "Just talking to myself."

Robin: "Well, you had better stop right now 'cause anyone who talks to herself has bats in her belfry."

Peggy: "Cindy's batty, Cindy's batty."

That night Cindy asked her Dad if spy planes could be tiny. He said it was theoretically possible! When she asked him to show her a split affinity, he said that "to be" is an infinitive, and that Shakespeare had showed how to avoid splitting one: "To be or . . .

Cindy: ". . . not to be... That is the question."

Mr. Balfour: "Now, if Shakespeare had split the infinitive, he would have said: 'To be or to not be . . . That is the question.' So, do as Shakespeare did; don't put any word in between the two words of the infinitive, and you'll get it right."

Cindy: "Well, Dad, Tootsie says <u>infinitives</u> are large numbers, bigger 'n the number of grains of sand on the beach."

Mr. Balfour: "Hmm, he must mean <u>infinity</u>. Well, that's a number so large that it can never be counted. If you ever study Zeno's paradoxes and calculus, you'll understand more about infinity."

That night, during "lights out", Cindy told Robin, "I'm gonna meet Pat at the banana tree tomorrow."

Robin informed her, "It's not a real tree; it has a hollow stern. So it's really a banana plant. Now shush up and go to sleep. I've got to get up early to do my homework."

Cindy: "to sleep, to get and to do are infinitives. You didn't split any. And, now I know what Shakespeare's plays are 'bout. He was English, and his big question was whether to split or not to split infinitives."

Robin: "Silence in the courthouse. The monkey wants to speak."

Cindy glanced at her night-stand. The Nikko monkeys were silent.

The next morning, two five-year-old met at the banana tree.

Cindy: "My Dad sez spy planes can be very tiny. You seen any Rushing or 'Merican spy planes?"

Pat: "You're not as batty as those school kids think you are, Cindy. See that thing fluttering by the suckers at the base of your Dad's banana tree?"

"Oh, that's a butterfly."

"Think again, Cindy. It's probably a Rushing spy plane checking to see if there are any suckers at the base of you Dad's tree. If there are no suckers, it looks 'spicious. The Rushings would think it was not a real tree."

"But, Pat, it is not a real tree!"

"You're kidding! What about them two suckers?"

"No, they're not trees either!"

"Well, Cindy, thanks for telling me. I've got work to do."

"Whose side are you on — the Rushing or the 'Merican?"

"I'm on my own side. See ya later, Sissy."

Untitled
Alicia Tooley

My angel's hair brushed on my face
and whispered soft to me.
It is not what's on the outside,
but the inside that I see.

"I leave you all my peace
in this not sacred place."
And then she melted in my soul
and left her smile on my face.

Melodrama
Teri Danai Vrakas

Lonesome, lonesome
Melancholy
No
Laughing, laughing
Bright and jolly
A room full of people
Dancing everywhere
None can take my loneliness
Or my forlorn stare
Sadness, sadness
Gone is gladness
Without you near my heart
Celebration, jubilation
The day we must not part

A Classic Case of the Stupidity of a Beautiful Man. . .or Love Lorn Woman?
Teri Danai Vrakas

Who do you tell at night that you kissed me
As I surrendered in the hallway
To what I thought was an expression
    of your love
I have no one who will listen
So kiss me again
Cover your knightly self with me
    as your shield
And console your cowardice with my lips

Speaking to the Dead
Bill Yarrow
(Faculty)

I didn't hear your last words or see
your last eyes. I sat there by your corpse,
silently saying good-bye.
    I am in that process,
not sour, not sweet, that yoked
    speaking which can't
(because the heart won't let it) utter
    its whispered
last word, but stutters instead
    like the awful-eyed
idiot of love, stroking a hand
    and thinking it speech.
Nothing pulses now from your cold,
    dead palm;
no language pulses, no words trickle out.
You're beyond language. Yet the old talk
persists. I hear it—strengthening the silence.
I do not coronate the disjunction.
Nothing new is installed, or old revoked.

Wordeater 104 Student Jury:

Jeff Adams
Nicolle Byrnside
Jeff Hicks
Nancy Lockhart
Francine Tolf

Awards

Prose ($5.00)

Evelyn Smith
Bonnie Kodrick
Mike Kalata

Poetry ($5.00)

Jennifer Gebhardt
Sally Biggs
Susan Irvine
Jason Braasch
Hero Hartley

Cover Design ($20.00)

Michael Fletcher

John Stobart is solely responsible for the awards.

Manuscript and cover designs must be submitted to:
John Stobart, Room C-1069

by

February 10, 1999 - Wordeater 105
April 21, 1999 - Wordeater 106

Cover Designs submitted must be one inch margins all around.
Emphasize lines. Use india ink.

This issue contains selections from students, faculty, alumni and friends of Joliet Junior College. Only current students are eligible for awards. Awards are not made to "anonymous" or pen name writers. Sign each page submitted and include your student identification number.

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MICHAEL FLETCHER 98.